

REMARKS

Applicants request reconsideration of the application in view of the following remarks. Claims 1-11 and 13-18 are pending. Claim 1 was amended to correct informality. It is believed that no new matter has been added by way of any amendments provided herein.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103

Claims 1 through 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Myers et al. (US 6,777,377) in view of Moradi-Araghi et al. (US 5,789,350). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Currently, claim 1 clearly states that the “stabilization treatment is carried out during the drilling of the well.” Myers et al. impose a method for sealing porous or fractured subterranean formations during the drilling. However, Moradi-Araghi et al. does not disclose that the composition within is able to be used during drilling. Examiner clearly states that the composition is used “for the purpose of, but is not limited, to permeability alteration, water coning correction, water shutoff, gas shutoff, and zone abandonment. (col. 3, l. 2-4)” as mentioned by Moradi-Araghi et al. All those application refers to static treatment applications or post-drilling applications, not suitable for active treatment or during drilling, where the rotation of the drill bite can disrupt the treatment steps. Nothing in Moradi-Araghi et al. teaches that the composition could be extended to any type of application. So it can not be obvious for the person of ordinary skill in the art to employ the treatment composition of Moradi-Araghi et al. within the drilling/stabilizing method of Myers et al., since the person of ordinary skill in the art is faced with technical difficulties, that he can only be overcome through an inventive step.

Claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Myers et al. in view of Moradi-Araghi et al. and in view of Fox et al. (US 5,849,674). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection for the reasons stated above, same arguments applying to claim 7.

Claims 8 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Myers et al. in view of Moradi-Araghi et al. and in view of "Zirconium (IV) Chloride". Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. For the reasons stated above, the same arguments apply to claims 8 and 9. Further, the combination of Myers et al. and Moradi-Araghi et al. fails to suggest the use of a specific weak acid, nor is there motivation to use a zirconium chloride and acetate composition, especially to use a 5-20% solution of zirconium chloride in seawater.

Claims 11, 13, and 14, and claims 16 through 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Myers et al. in view of Moradi-Araghi et al. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection for the reasons stated above, same arguments applying to claims 11, 13, and 14, and claims 16 through 18.

Claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Myers et al. in view of Moradi-Araghi et al. and in view of Parris et al. (US 6,011,075). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. For the reasons stated above, same arguments apply to claim 10, and further Parris et al. method to enhance gel strength applies to static application as stated above. Nothing in Parris et al. teaches that such method could be applicable for active treatment or during drilling.

Claim 15 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Myers et al. in view of Moradi-Araghi et al. and in view of Gunn et al. (WO01/49971). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection for the reasons stated above, same arguments applying to claim 15.

Applicants believe this reply to be fully responsive to all outstanding issues. This paper is submitted in response to the Office Action dated February 15, 2008 for which the five month date for response is July 15, 2008. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-2183 (Reference Number 21.1214).

Respectfully submitted,



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